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GUATEMALA A-209

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incidents this month (16% of the total), 3 incidents (7%) were attributed to the Government, and the remainder of the total was not readily attributable.

Comment: The incidence of political violence returned this month to the low level of May and June, perhaps indicating that the upward turn in July-August did not represent any election-related trend. End Comment.

II. Santa Rosa: The department of Santa Rosa accounted for nine of the incidents this month or 20% of the total, an unusually high percentage for one department. All of the incidents in Santa Rosa were assassinations, four with reported signs of torture. The bodies of five victims were discovered in Chiquimulilla, which also was the scene of one murder and one kidnapping last month and the reported capture of two FAR members at the end of July. The Santa Rosa incidents contributed to this month's total of 20 for the South Coast region, which brought the South Coast back after two months absence to its usual position of leading the region in incidence of political violence.

III. Subversive Bombs and Stunts: On the morning of September 26, in full view of many motorists and pedestrians, several cars converged at the principal national monument at the end of La Reforma Boulevard in the capital. The occupants quickly deposited two wreaths and a card in remembrance of eight PGT leaders who "disappeared" on the same day a year before. The card was signed by the PGT, FAR and JPT (Communist youth group). This incident was the seventh this month in which subversive propaganda activities reminded Guatemalans that the guerrilla groups still exist. On the morning of September 25, the day before the wreath laying ceremony, the Army Monument on La Reforma appeared covered with red paint. During the Independence Day weekend (September 14-16) three propaganda bombs exploded in Escuintla and subversive posters were discovered in San Pedro Pinula, Jalapa and in two municipalities of San Marcos. However, the anniversary of the founding of the PGT, September 28, passed without any incidents.

Comment: The subversive group's placing of funeral wreaths at the monument indicates that they, like everyone else, assume that the eight PGT leaders are dead. End Comment.

IV. Laugerud and Rios Comment on Guerrilla Problem: During a press conference on September 6 General Kjell Laugerud, the Government Coalition's presidential candidate, commented that "The guerrilla only understands the language of the blast of a machine gun." Laugerud observed that attempts to solve the guerrilla problem by offering amnesty had failed in Guatemala

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during the regime of Mendez Montenegro and in other countries as well. In the Guatemalan case, according to Laugerud, the guerrillas in jail took advantage of the amnesty to return to violent activity. Laugerud considered the guerrilla problem largely eradicated in Guatemala, but acknowledged that some still operated in the western frontier area. In response to questions on the same subject, General Efraim Rios Montt, the Christian Democrats' presidential candidate, told reporters September 29 that there were no "ideological guerrillas" in Guatemala but only people who resorted to crime because of economic misery.

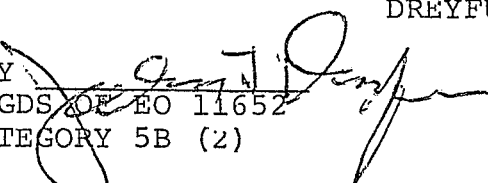
Comment: The internal security situation seems likely to take second place to inflation as a campaign issue and Rios' remark suggests he may attempt to treat the two problems as unitary.
End Comment.

V. Purge in Treasury Police: After taking office in late August, the new Treasury Police director, Colonel Manuel de J. Perez Jerez launched a "purification" campaign which so far has resulted in the suspension of about 65 agents pending investigation of corruption charges. Corruption among the Treasury police has been a problem for some time and Perez was appointed with a mandate to clean up the 1100-man force.

VI. Unexplained Incidents: A wealthy young Retalhuleu industrialist kidnapped September 5 was released safe and sound on the 19th. Jose Marroquin Moran, 29, told reporters ^{that} at the time of ^{his} release ~~that~~ his captors apologized for kidnapping him by mistake because of his resemblance to another man. Marroquin refused to speculate as to the identity of his assailants or to discuss whether ransom was paid.

Physical-culturist Victor Augusto Godoy Garcia, "Mr. Guatemala" of 1964, was kidnapped September 24 near his home in the capital by unknown assailants carrying machine guns. The press speculated that the incident might be related to the slaying one month earlier of Mariano Codoner, "Mr. Guatemala" of 1961.

DREYFUSS 

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EXEMPT FROM GDS OF EO 11652
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5B (2)

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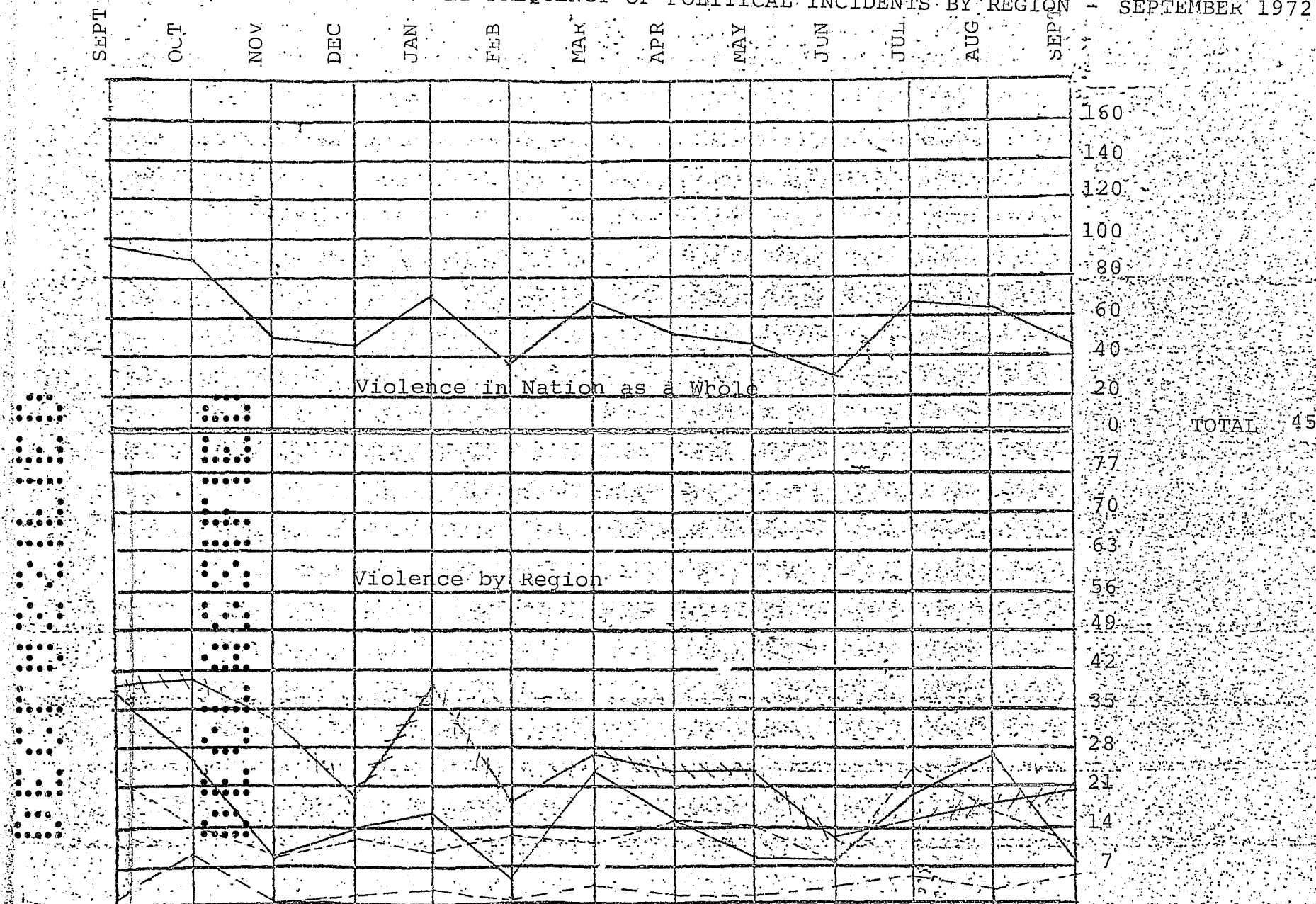
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MONTHLY FREQUENCY OF POLITICAL INCIDENTS BY REGION - SEPTEMBER 1972 - SEPTEMBER 1973

ENCLOSURE

Guatemala

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For purposes of this graph, acts of violence include shootings, bombings, and deaths, all of which appear to be politically motivated.

Capital area - Sacatepequez, Guatemala

South Coast - San Marcos, Quezaltenango, Retalhuleu, Suchitepequez, Escuintla, Santa Rosa

Eastern Region - Jutiapa, El Progreso, Jalapa, Zacapa, Chiquimula, Izabal, El Peten

Highlands - Totonicapan, Chimaltenango, Huehuetenango, El Quiche, Baja Verapaz, Alta Verapaz, Solola